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The wounded word

Simon Peter Long

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Simon L. M. Hines





The Wounded Word

*A BRIEF MEDITATION ON
THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF
CHRIST ON THE CROSS*

BY

REV. S. P. LONG, A. M.

Pastor of First English Lutheran Church, Mansfield, Ohio

"He was wounded for our transgressions."—Isaiah 53, 5.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God * * *
And the Word was made flesh and dwelt
among us."—John 1, 1-14.*

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Preface

PREFACE.

FOR the humble followers of the lowly Nazarene there is an irresistible charm and pathos in His ever memorable words from the cross. Every word of the living God is precious to the believer, and yet amid the words of life these seven utterances of the bleeding, dying Lamb of God shine forth with peculiar luster and continue to lead out the meditations of the Lord's people to unfathomable depths of the mystery of godliness. From the first period of the Christian era to the present these words have been selected as choice passion texts, and Christians who love to sing of "Jesus, Lover of my soul," will never cease to be interested in suitable meditations upon these last words of the dying Savior.

The author of these meditations is known among us for originality and fearless fervor. In his bold sallies and unique excursions he sometimes shocks more conservative and quiet brethren. But his well meant purpose is often attained: he arrests attention and sets his hearers and readers to thinking. May his meditations upon these sacred texts and themes be richly blessed unto the edification of many souls. This, I am sure, is the author's object and aim in publishing them. In the advancement of the eternal interests of perishing souls and the glory of God he will seek and find his highest and all-sufficient reward.

E. PFEIFFER.

Preface to the Second Edition.

**"In my hands no price I bring
Simply to Thy cross I cling."**

S. P. LONG.

Mansfield, O., 1908.

Contents

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

HANGING ON THE CROSS THREE HOURS IN THE LIGHT —

INTERCEDING.

	PAGE
Sermon I. For His persecutors	23
Sermon II. For the penitent thief.....	31
Sermon III. For His mother	40

PART II.

HANGING ON THE CROSS THREE HOURS IN THE NIGHT —

ATONING.

Sermon IV. Crying	53
Sermon V. Thirsting	60
Sermon VI. Dying	68

CONCLUSION.

Sermon VII. Meeting the Father at death's door.....	76
THE SEVEN WORDS ON THE CROSS.....	85

Introduction

INTRODUCTION.

LET us pray : Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world ; O Holy Father, Thou who hast given Thine only begotten Son to take away the sins of the world ; O Holy Spirit, Thou who canst open the eyes of the blind sinners to behold this Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world — O Triune God, take us now and lead us up to Calvary's hill and open our eyes to see and our ears to hear and our hearts to receive and believe, that we may be saved. Amen.

Dear Brethren : However old this world and yonder worlds may be, the Word is older. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1-3. As we approach Calvary's hill, let us not forget that Jesus created all the hills. Let us not forget that —

"God The *Mighty Maker* died."

Let us not forget that "the *Word* was made flesh" when the Son of God became the Son of

man. Let us not forget at any time, much less now in this Lenten season, how the Word suffered. Of course we cannot understand it! Can the worm, cut in two by the gardener's spade, understand the pain of a man cut in two? Then how shall we ever understand the sufferings of the Logos, the Divine-human sacrifice? For Him to leave His throne for a cattle's crib; for Him to begin shedding blood when eight days old in the flesh; for the King of heaven and earth to have no place to lay His head, to be betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter, to be scourged, mocked, crowned with thorns, condemned to be crucified: how shall we poor worms of this earth ever comprehend even the sufferings of the Word on the way to the cross?

Then, when we follow Him *under* the cross between thieves to the hill covered with skulls — Golgotha — and watch them wound the Word there, like His disciples, we shrink back! Keeping in mind that the highest life is subject to the greatest pain, I would further have you to remember that crucifixion is the most cruel torture. Do you realize what crucifixion means? See that large beam with another intersecting it at right angles, or sometimes a knotted tree with all the limbs trimmed off but two on which to nail the hands! I am inclined

to think that the cross of Christ was made of a tree, for Paul says :

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Gal. 3, 13. There on the hill of skulls by a hole lies one of these beams, or trees, between two others intended for thieves. On the top of that cross the Word sees some words in Latin, Greek and Hebrew: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” With His back turned to these words, the Lamb of God is pulled down on the cross and His thorny crown is His pillow. At each hand and foot there are Roman soldiers pulling with all their might, and a mark is made just a little above the center of each hand and below the center of each foot. Then holes are bored into His hands and feet and where the marks were made on the tree. Now the bleeding feet that walked on the waters of Galilee are pinned fast, and the Eternal Word is jerked back till the thorny crown almost touches the words of Pilate. The holes in the hands do not reach the holes in the wood, but they *must* reach! The lower pin holds the feet, and strong Roman arms pull at the hands of Jesus and pull and pull and pull till every pore of the Savior becomes a fountain and every joint lets go, and the prophet’s

words are fulfilled: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint." Ps. 22, 14. Then the hands are nailed fast and the cross is lifted up. It is nine o'clock in the morning. Up! Up! Up! with the King of the Jews! Steady! Let it drop! Oh! the pain when the cross struck the bottom of that hole! Pain from every nerve in the right foot. Pain from every nerve in the left foot. Pain from every nerve in the right hand. Pain from every nerve in the left hand. Pain from the head with thorns outside and blood-vessels pressing the brain inside. Pains from enemies mocking and disciples deserting. The worst of pains from all directions center in the heart of Jesus! "He was wounded for our transgressions." Brethren, let us now stand close to the cross and learn from

THE WOUNDED WORD.

For six long hours our Savior hangs on the cross. Under the light of the burning sun He hangs from nine o'clock till noon in sight of Jerusalem. It is Jesus—Jerusalem cannot deny it. It is Jesus—the sun is shining for three hours on the sign Pilate nailed above His head, and friends and foes read: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It is the

Wounded Word, for He is seen on a hill for the three brightest hours of the day. What a blessing it is that Jesus was not crucified at nine o'clock in the night. The world would say today yet: How do you know that it was Jesus? I do not suppose there ever were three brighter hours and three darker hours than when Jesus was crucified:

- I. *Hanging on the cross three hours in the light — interceding.*
- II. *Hanging on the cross three hours more in the night — atoning.*

How we love to linger on the last words of dying relatives and friends, or a wounded soldier! But the Word of God is always more precious than the words of dying man. How, then, can we afford to miss one syllable of the dying Savior — the Wounded Word?

Part I

PART I.

Let us now spend three hours with the Wounded Word on the cross and in the bright sunlight, listen to Him interceding for His persecutors, the penitent thief, and His mother.

SERMON I.

THE WOUNDED WORD INTERCEDING FOR HIS PERSECUTORS.

FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23, 34.

FIRST MEDITATION.

Can it be? We have heard how every means was used to torture our Savior, and while they are nailing Him to the accursed tree, He prays: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is a melting prayer — enough to melt hearts of stone. What a revelation? By that prayer the Wounded Word tells us *Who He is* and *what He is* and *What we are* and *what we should be*.

"O bleeding Head and wounded
And full of pain and scorn,
In mockery surrounded
With cruel crown of thorn!
O Head before adorned
With grace and majesty,
Insulted now and scorned,
All hail I bid to Thee."

Thy prayer for Thy persecutors has taught us four great lessons :

First, now we know who Thou art. God is Thy Father, and Thou art the Son of God and the Son of man. Amen. Surely this is the prayer of the Word made flesh. He did not say *Our* Father or *My* Father, but simply Father. The Wounded Word on the cross is the only Son of the only God. Only then when we become children of the Wounded Word does His Father become, "Our Father who art in heaven." How long will it take this blind world to learn this lesson? God is not our Father because He created us. God created the fish — is He their Father? What right has a man to pray the Lord's prayer, if he does not believe in Christ? No more than a parrot has — not as much, for the man has rejected the Father's only Son and the parrot has not. Notice well: God loves His wounded Son on the cross and hears the Eternal Word say, Father!

But this Son of God must be Son of man. He is no Spirit without flesh and bone. See His lacerated wounds! They have taken His garment off and are casting lots for it. The sun strikes His blood-stained body. Only the cross on which He hangs hides the furrows from the lashes He received the night before.

"Behold the *man*! How heavy lay
On Him the sinner's burden!
What grievous price had He to pay
That we might hope for pardon."

And this Wounded Word, this God-man, is our Mediator. Hear Him pray, "Father, forgive them!" This is our Prophet, High-Priest, and King.

Moses said: "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken." Deut. 18, 15. Jesus said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John 3, 14. Again He said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12, 32. And now the Prophet is lifted up as He said:

"'Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,'
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!
'Tis the long expected *Prophet*,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis the true and faithful Word."

The Wounded Word is Himself the dying Lamb, the victim offered for the sins which He

is praying the Father to forgive. He is pleading His own blood. What an Advocate with the Father! What a powerful prayer! No wonder the inspired writer exclaimed: "We have a great High Priest." Heb. 4, 14.

When Pilate wrote the superscription on the cross, "*Jesus, Nazarenius, Rex Judaeorum*," *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*, he did not know how much truth he was publishing in three languages to the world. Truly this is the prayer of the King of kings! That scene on Calvary is too deep for mortal eyes. It is one of those scenes that the angels desire to look into. That the wounded Son of man on the cross should be the Wounded Word by whom all things were made is too deep for us; yet, it seems to me, I can see our King hanging there. Which is harder, for the Eternal Word to make worlds, or to withhold His Almighty power and let sinners crucify Him? Oh, the Almighty power of the Eternal Word, when He let Himself be wounded by man and did nothing but pray and atone for him!

In the presence of the Wounded Word we must not fail to see ourselves. In the light of the cross and this prayer we can find ourselves *active, ignorant, valuable, loved, sinners*.

Only sinners need forgiveness. "Father,

forgive them for they know not what they do.” How active around the cross. Some lifting, some pulling, some nailing, some mocking, some casting lots. How active we have all been in thought, word, and deed sinning against the Wounded Word! How we love to draw back out of the sight of Calvary when we want to do wrong! “They know not what they do!” Can that be true? Did those who crucified Jesus not know what they were doing? Did they not know that they were crucifying Jesus between two thieves near Jerusalem, on Calvary’s Hill, on a bright day at 9 o’clock in the morning? Yet we hear this prayer between the hammer strokes — “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” No! No! No! they did not know that morning that they were wounding the Eternal Word. Peter pricks them to the heart when he tells them afterwards that they killed the Prince of Life through ignorance. Acts 3, 15-17. Paul exclaims to the Corinthians: “Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.” 1 Cor. 2, 8. How can it be that they did not know that He who raised Lazarus from the dead was the Son of God? How can it be that the wisest people of Jerusalem did not know what they were doing? Let me answer by asking another question: How can it be that

many of our well educated people are not Christians? There is only one answer — the Wounded Word gave it — “They know not what they do!” The only hope for the greatest philosophers of this world today is their great ignorance. We poor sinners never do know what we are doing till we hear the Wounded Word telling us.

This prayer of Jesus tells us that we are *valuable* sinners. Jesus did not die for silver, gold, or diamonds. He did not die for the earth, or other worlds; but He did die for us. The Wounded Word “purchased and won me from all sins, from death and the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own.”

And as the Father loved Him on the cross, He loved us. He cannot embrace us, for His hands are nailed fast, but He moves His tongue in love and says: Father, forgive them. Before the breast is wounded I hear this prayer, and the four nail-marks spell nothing to my soul but L-O-V-E. It overwhelms me to hear Jesus praying for those who torture Him. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Surely, God loves us!

This prayer tells not only what we are, but what we should be: We should be free from the

ignorance of the devil, of the learned, of the lost, of the unforgiving.

No one can look upon the crucifixion of Christ without noticing how devilish the whole act was. Certainly, Satan knows much and was the great general of the crucifiers, and yet he was too ignorant to notice that he was bringing about redemption. Let us be free from a master who is too ignorant to know that he is crushing his own head. Chief priests and Pharisees — learned men — cried: Crucify Him! They did not know as much about Jesus as a little child. Who knows less today of the Savior and His Word than the learned? Many of our educators are driving souls to hell! Oh that we were free from the clutches of false science! The world is full of unbelievers, and the Wounded Word wants all saved. Father, forgive them, O Father deliver them, from the ignorance of the lost, for they know not what they do.

Some think it looks even smart to hate their neighbors and not speak to them: this, too, is ignorance from which we should be free. Such people do not live close to the Wounded Word. Have we ever been wounded like Jesus? Has any one ever driven nails through our hands and hung us by our net-work of nerves to a tree? If so, if we follow Jesus without being asked we

will pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Dear Brethren, if you have ignorant unforgiving spirits in you, dwell on Calvary's Hill with your eyes on the enemies of Jesus and on His wounds and put your ears close to His mouth and hear Him say till you can pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This first intercession was not in vain. That tree, that cursed tree, bore fruit that day yet for heaven. That prayer melted the heart of a thief and made murderers think and a centurion strike his breast and exclaim: "Truly, this was the Son of God." Oh, that I could say this day, Truly, we are all children of God!

"When on the cross the Savior hung
And that sore load that on Him weighed
With bitter pangs His nature wrung,
Seven words amid His pain He said:
O let them well to heart be laid!"

"'Father, forgive these men,' He spake,
'For lo! they know not what they do;
Nor of my sufferings vengeance take!'
And when we sin in weakness, too,
For us, dear Lord, this prayer renew."

Amen.

SERMON II.

THE WOUNDED WORD INTERCEDING FOR THE PENITENT THIEF.

“**V**ERILY I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23, 43.

SECOND MEDITATION.

Let us pray! O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, we have listened to Thy prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” and the tree on which Thou hangest is already bearing fruit. Thy blood is washing away the sins of a penitent thief and we hear Thy sweet words, O Wounded Word, “Verily I say unto thee, Today, shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” Apply these words to our souls now for Thy name’s sake. Amen.

“He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sins of many, and *made intercession for the transgressors.*” Isaiah 53, 12. On each side of Jesus hangs a thief — “on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.” John 19, 18. He was numbered with these thieves and made intercession for them, too, when He said, “Fa-

ther, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was the first saying of the Wounded Word that resulted in the second. Let us now draw near to the Wounded Word on the cross and listen to His interceding as it melts the heart of one of the malefactors, who was:

- I. *As bad a character as ever lived.*
- II. *As good a Christian as ever died.*

I. Who was this thief? If the Bible were the production of a human author, it would tell us this thief's name and it never would have told us that that drunken man was Noah and that adulterer King David; but it is God's way to reveal what man would conceal and conceal what man would reveal. We need not know *who* he was; what the Holy Spirit wants us to know now is who the Wounded Word is and *what* the malefactor was and now is.

In the three crosses on Calvary's hill we have a picture of the world: Christ, the only Savior, in the midst of great sinners—one repents and the other does not. Both thieves were born in sin, lived in sin, knew their sins and were not ashamed of them up to the time when they were crucified. Matthew tells us that both of these thieves mocked Jesus. 28, 41-44. We must not think that one was naturally better than the other, or that they were nearly as inno-

cent as the Wounded Word. It was the very object of the wicked world, in order to hide its crime, to lead Jesus and crucify Him with the most wicked criminals that could be found. Their crimes were well known and they themselves knew that they deserved death. One tells the other so, as they hang there to die, and the other does not deny it. Common criminals, outcasts from the world's sympathy, usually sympathize with each other, but these brazen men mock the Wounded Word. On either side of the Tree of Life these heartless brazen malefactors hang and draw the cross-cut saw of mockery till it cuts into the bleeding heart! Up to this point you have in these two thieves a picture of a world full of sin, crime, darkness, shamelessness — a picture of a thief who before his repentance was as bad a character as ever lived. What a blessing it was that he was hanging near a Savior who could save great sinners! What a blessing for you and for me that Jesus is still a Savior of great sinners! They tell us that this doctrine is dangerous — that it encourages sin. Does it? Do people love to fracture their bones because they have a good physician who can reduce the fracture? Does it encourage filth to have good clean water? Do we want a Savior who cannot

save great sinners? What would become of you and me, then? Why were not both thieves saved? They both saw Jesus; they both heard Jesus; they both were dying; they both could have been saved, but one, like a great part of the world today yet, *would not*.

Hear the Word before He was wounded on the cross crying — not far from Calvary — “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not!*”

In the bright sunlight of the first three hours on Calvary one thief decided to enter eternity by the light of the Sun of Righteousness and right then and there became as good a Christian as ever lived.

II. Why do I say that the penitent thief was as good a Christian as ever lived? Let me tell you why: No Christian, as far as I know, ever understood the blessing of capital punishment any better than he did; none ever made better use of the means of grace; none ever showed a more heroic faith; none ever tried harder to do good works; none ever earned his salvation any more than this thief did.

This thief was “justly” condemned to die.

He knew that his death was just. If the Christians of today had been there, I suppose there would have been a debate on the question: "Should capital punishment be abolished?" Why not debate this question: "Should God's Word be abolished?" Has not God settled this question long ago? "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Gen. 3, 6. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. 26, 52. Is not the government of God? Rom. 13. Has God not the right to take life? Has He not a right to protect the living? Has He not the right to lead a murderer to repentance by letting him know the day and hour of his death? To imprison a murderer for life means to let a great sinner die unprepared. If a man will not repent when he knows that on such a day and such an hour he must meet his God in death, he never will. The penitent thief, after he repented, said: "We receive the due reward of our deeds."

Who this thief was we do not know, but a great change came over him suddenly. Luke in his great charity does not even let us know that he, too, had mocked Jesus. What brought about this change? There was One there that prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This prayer was the Word of God and

it took hold of his soul. He saw that innocent face — that innocent Lamb of God, that Son of the Father in heaven and not one word did he lose that fell from those sacred lips. Was that thief baptized? I guess not; who should baptize him? Did he go to the Lord's Supper? I guess not, but all the Lord's Supper could give was before his eyes — His body and blood. He made all the use he could of the means of grace.

And was there ever a more heroic faith? The Syrophenician woman had a great faith, but it was no greater than the penitent thief's. Yea, I do not believe that it was as great. In her days Jesus was not nailed to a tree and wounded and bleeding. In her days His disciples stood by Him, but here on the cross, betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, apart from John, mocked by the dying, "rejected of men" and "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," the only voice in all the world that cried to Him and dared to call Him Lord, was the voice of the penitent thief. He heard; He saw; He believed; He confessed; He testified; He cried alone, when John was silent, out of the darkness of hell: "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" I know of no Christian in all the world who in that hour and that place could have caught sight of the King of kings better than

the penitent thief did. Since then the Wounded Word has risen from the dead and been exalted to the right hand of God, and yet many Christians today have not the faith that the penitent thief had when he saw the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Isaiah 53.

It was a short Christian life. At nine o'clock in the morning a mocking thief, before noon, a Christian; living yet when Jesus died at three o'clock in the afternoon; legs broken of both that they might die before the Sabbath. This man was a Christian on earth less than one day and yet he did more than some who have been Christians half a century. What can he do there on the cross with his hands and feet tied? He thinks; he feels; he speaks; he sees that he is dying for his crime, and the Wounded Word for his soul. He sees his awful mistake in the past and hastens to rebuke the other thief. He sees the innocence of Jesus and is the only one who will proclaim it to the world. He worked for Jesus when no one else did. Am I wrong when I say: A better Christian never died? Yes, you are wrong, says some one, for what has he done to save himself? I answer: *He did as much as any man that ever lived — nothing.* Hanging there on the cross, perfectly helpless, he looked to Jesus only for his salva-

tion; and that is as much as any one ever did to earn his salvation. What if his hands and feet were tied, he could sing:

"In my hands no price I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

He could cry as well as we can:

"Here Lord, I give myself away —
'Tis all that I can do."

Jesus could say to him as well as to us: "Look unto Me, all the ends of the earth and be ye saved, for I am God and there is none else."

Look at the penitent thief and you will see "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3, 28. Away from self, away from all human help, this penitent thief turns to Jesus, the Wounded Word, and says: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." And Jesus said unto him: "Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" — not in the grave, for that is no paradise—not in purgatory a while, but in paradise today — not in hell, for that is no paradise and Jesus did not descend that day. That very day the soul of the penitent thief went with the Spirit of our Savior into the hands of the Father into paradise, "a garden of delights." No won-

der Jesus took an oath that day and said "Verily." That poor, heartbroken thief needed such a word from Jesus. It was a Divine flash of the Wounded Word before

"The Mighty Maker died."

It opened a new door to a man and a race who thought paradise was a home for the body and not the soul. It was a truth that had no other authority than the Lord of His kingdom.

"He thought upon the thief and said,
 'Thou shalt behold my Paradise,
With me, ere yet this day be fled,
 Lord, see us, too, with pitying eyes,
And raise us from our miseries."

Amen.

SERMON III.

THE WOUNDED WORD INTERCEDING FOR HIS
MOTHER.

“**W**HEN Jesus therefore saw His mother,
and the disciple standing by whom
He loved, He saith unto His mother,
Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith He to the
disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that
hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”
John 19, 26-27.

THIRD MEDITATION.

Let us pray! O wounded and bleeding
Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the
world, we have heard the interceding for Thy
enemies and the penitent thief and we now take
courage to draw nearer to Thy cross and to
stand by Thy beloved disciple and Thy mother
while Thou art also interceding for her. O
Lord, wash away all our sins and pour into our
souls a large stream of Thy love and keep us
with Thee forever. Amen.

It is nearly noon. For three hours Jesus
has been hanging under the rays of the burning

sun. The wounds have extended by the weight of the body and the blood from heaven is running down to the earth from which Abel's blood cried to heaven. Three Marys are there and only one disciple of the twelve. Where is bold Peter now? It is not always the one that boasts the most that does the most. John never boasted what he would do, but he followed Jesus when the others forsook Him. He is the only evangelist that heard the Wounded Word interceding for ^{His} mother. Let us now draw near to the cross and notice that the Wounded Word in the midst of all His sufferings did not forget: *✍*

- I. *His Church;*
- II. *His ministry;*
- III. *His childhood;*
- IV. *His law.*

All this we see from His interceding for His mother at the close of that bright forenoon of the crucifixion.

I. When the eyes of Jesus rested on His mother and His aunt and Mary Magdalene and John and missed the other disciples and the multitude that cried a few days before: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," surely those eyes saw there a picture of His church. Where is the Church? Where two or

three are gathered together in the name of Jesus to hear His Word and to make use of His means of grace, there is the Church.) But look around you this very day. Where are the men? Where are your husbands? Where are your sons? They promised like Peter that they would never forsake Him — where are they? The Wounded Word hangs on the cross and is bleeding and dying for them and crying with His wounds: Where are they? That was a small Christian congregation on Calvary that morning: Three women and one man and one new member added. Why did Jesus call His mother “Woman?” Because He thought of His Church. He knew that the time would come that false doctrines would creep into the Church. He knew that as the rich man in hell cried to Abraham, some people on earth would pray to His mother who was nothing but a poor mortal. When we remember that Jesus on the cross calls His mother woman, and that John in all his epistles and the Revelation never mentions Mary, although he was the last apostle to die, can we not notice on Calvary what a blow Jesus gives with His cross to the Romish Church which prays to the Virgin Mary?

It is remarkable that the very church which makes the cross most honors the cross least. We have no more right to pray to the mother of

Jesus than we have to pray to our sainted mothers.

II. Only twice do we know that Jesus addressed His mother by calling her "Woman:." The last time when He was dying, the first time when He began His ministry. Then He said: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" John 2, 4. He was about to make wine of water. His mother could not perform miracles. When it came to doing the acts of God, the world must know that Mary is only a woman. In the midst of all His sufferings Jesus did not forget His ministry. He remembered on the cross all that He taught and all that He did and carried out His teachings to perfection. In all His agony He did not forget His first miracle, a single prophecy, or His sermon on the mount. Alone He trod the wine-press of the wrath of God from "woman" on Calvary to "woman" at Cana of Galilee. Did He not forget His future ministry when He said to John: "Behold thy mother!?" Tradition tells us that John took Mary home and kept her fifteen years till she died. Was that not a mistake to keep such a useful man as John at home for fifteen years? Did Jesus not forget the ministry on the cross? No, indeed! Could not John do a good work at home the first fifteen years? Did not Jesus add more than fif-

teen years to John's life? Did not John preach longer than any of the disciples who were absent that day? Have you forgotten that about one hundred years after Jesus was born He said to John: "Surely I come quickly Amen?" Rev. 22, 20.

III. When Jesus saw His mother He did not forget His childhood. He did not forget the thirty-three years since He was born at Bethlehem that that mother's heart was fixed on Him. It was she who bore Him to the crib and to the temple and laid Him on Simeon's arm. It was to her that Simeon said: "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul." Luke 2, 35. Surely, that sword was doing its work now. Other mothers have had good sons, but she was the only mother that conceived of the Holy Ghost and gave to the world a sinless Son. Other mothers have seen their sons suffer, but none ever had one to suffer as Mary's did. Every stroke of the hammer on the nails, every thorn in His crown, every piercing word of an enemy, every twitch of His nerves, even His loving words; all pierced her to the heart. Who knows today whether Mary looked at John or Jesus when she heard Him call: "Woman, Behold thy Son!"? Oh, how that mother must have felt the pang when her own Son and Savior was bearing

the sins of the world. Well has it been said that from His four wounds flowed the four rivers of Paradise which were to fertilize the whole earth.

IV. The justice of God demanded death for sin, and since the innocent Lamb of God had taken the sins of the world on Himself, He did not forget His law on the cross. Surely He loved God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength, and His neighbor as Himself. In all His sufferings He did not forget the fourth commandment. He did not forget His aged mother. Come right up to the cross now, children and parents, poor and forsaken, helpless and heart-pierced, and let us listen and look and learn.

First, notice how poor Jesus is. Judas has hanged himself, and the money and the disciples are gone. The Lord's clothing is torn from His back and divided among the gamblers. He has no house, no home, no clothing, no life-insurance policy — almost dead and too poor to have a grave of His own! *In all the world there never was one as poor as the Wounded Word.*

What shall become of His poor mother? Does she complain? No! Oh, how she puts us to shame! What can the poor Savior do for His mother? He made the best will that was ever made. He selected a man of His own age — not His brothers, for they were unbelievers —

not Peter, for he will soon be crucified, too — a man who was filled with His own love, a man who will treat Mary as a mother and whom Mary will treat as a son. “When Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, Behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home!” John had lived so near to Jesus that Mary was to him like a mother and he to her like a son. So you see how Jesus in all His poverty willed to His mother the love of His disciple. Through John Jesus gave Mary a good home till she came to the Home which He purchased for her with His blood. How Jesus loved His mother! She knew that He loved her. She knew why He called her “Woman;” not only to tell the church that she should not be worshipped, but to make her burden as light as possible. What is more touching than to hear a suffering child say “Mother!” I shall never forget how I felt when as a little boy I attended a funeral and heard a little girl, standing by the casket of her father, crying: “Papa, papa!” Mary had suffered enough and Jesus did not want to pierce her heart anew by saying: “Mother!” “And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own

home" — why from that hour? Why did not Jesus wait till in the afternoon? I'll tell you why: He loved His mother too much. The sun was to go down about noon. The prophet said so. Amos 8, 9. It was not to be an eclipse, for the moon was full, and the darkness was to last nearly twelve times as long as an eclipse. The hour was approaching when the world was to express its sympathy with the Wounded Word, and men stronger than mothers would smite their breasts. The time was approaching when interceding would cease and the heart-breaking cry of the Wounded Word atoning, would break the mother's heart, if she should stay on Calvary.

It was nearing twelve o'clock and soon all will be dark. While John and Mary are walking to his home let us not forget that afflictions are blessings, that Jesus can take care of us, that we never can do too much for our parents, and that it is a shame to let them live and die in the homes of scoffers.

"His mother stood beside Him there;
 'Behold thy son! And let her find
A son, O John, in thy true care.'
 Lord care for those we leave behind,
 Nor let the world prove all unkind!"

Amen.

Part II

PART II.

It was twelve o'clock — the noon hour of the day of the crucifixion and, I believe, of the world's history. From nine o'clock to twelve the world had time enough to show how sinful sin could be, to convince itself that the crucified One in the center of the group was "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It was time enough for those who were committing Deicide to see the moving lips of the Wounded Word interceding for them, for the penitent thief and for His mother, Mary. It was time now that the prophecy should be fulfilled: "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." Amos 8, 9. It was time now that mocking should cease. It was time now that the Wounded Word should hang three hours in the black darkness atoning — *crying, thirsting, dying.*

SERMON IV.

THE WOUNDED WORD CRYING.

“**N**OW from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Matt. 27, 46-47.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

Let us pray! Dear Savior, Thou Light of the world, lead us up to Thy cross and let us there keep silence during the three dark hours of Thine unspeakable sufferings. Dispel all darkness from our souls while we hear Thee crying the cry of the lost that we might be saved. O Thou crucified Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, let us never forget those last three hours of awful darkness and awful silence before Thou didst cry: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Amen.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when Jesus reached the dregs of the wine-cup of God's wrath and thus cried out:

- I. *After three hours of awful darkness.*
- II. *After three hours of awful silence.*

I. If the worlds were framed by the Word,
is it any wonder that the sun refused to shine
at noon on the Wounded Word?

"I asked the heavens, 'What foe to God hath done
This unexampled deed?' The heavens exclaim,
'Twas man; and we in horror snatched the sun
From such a spectacle of guilt and shame.'"

"That sacrifice!—the death of Him—
The high and ever Holy One!
Well may the conscious heaven grow dim,
And blacken the beholding sun."

"Behold, a purple torrent run
Down from His hands and head;
The crimson tide puts out the sun;
His groans awake the dead."

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut His glories in
When God, the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin."

This awful darkness, three hours before
Jesus cried on the cross in the language of our
text was *miraculous, universal, and symbolic.*

I shall not stop here to argue with those
who deny miracles. To admit that there is a
God is an admission that He can depart from

His natural laws or He would deify them and thereby renounce His Godhead. As stated before, Christ was crucified just before the Pass-over, the time of the full moon when there could be no eclipse of the sun, and there never was a natural total eclipse that lasted one-tenth the time of the awful darkness of the day of the crucifixion.

This wonderful miracle in nature by the Lord in His weakness was in perfect harmony with His crucifixion. True, there never was such a darkness at noon before, nor was there ever a crucifixion of the Son of God before. Was it impossible that there should be a darkness of the sun then? It was no more impossible than that God should die. The creative Word was now doing what He never did before, and it is no wonder that His works were in perfect sympathy with Him. Indeed, the crucifixion would have been incomplete without the miraculous darkness. It was God's way of harmonizing the disharmony of that day.

And that darkness was *universal*. It was not simply a dark day at Jersalem, or in the Holy Land. Luke says "there was a darkness over all the earth (ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν) until the ninth hour." Half of the globe is always in partial

darkness, but when that sun went down at noon the whole earth was dark.

At high noon all nature gave a midnight cry and the loud voices on Calvary were hushed and sinners trembled and poets far away from Jerusalem wrote: "God is suffering or the world is perishing," and the pilot on the Nile heard the nestling rushes whispering: "The great Pan is dead." No wonder Tertullian exclaimed to the Romans: "Examine your own annals and there you will find that in the days of Pilate, when Christ died, the sun disappeared in full day and the mid-day light was interrupted." St. Dyonisius was in the city of Heliopolis in Egypt and wrote to St. Polycarp that he saw the "awful darkness" of that day. And Phlegon, the Greek historian, tells us that in the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad "a failure of the sun took place so that at the sixth hour of the day the day was turned into the darkness of night." Thus, for three long hours the whole earth was in darkness — the sun refused to shine because the Light of the world was going down into the darkness of death. O ye scoffers and fools who reject the crucified Savior, the sun of the heavens will condemn you for not believing its testimony written with black letters at noon on the face of the whole

earth and on the pages of profane and sacred history that day when Jesus died!

That awful darkness was *symbolic*. Blacker than the dark heavens were the hearts of those who crucified Jesus. What an emblem of the wrath of God on those who crucified His Son was heaven robbed of the light of the sun! What a fit garment that darkness was for the powers of hell that day! Jesus was not only hanging in the dark, but the darkness without was not as great as the darkness within. When first nailed on the cross, He not only saw the brightness of the sun but of His Father's face, but justice now demanded that the Substitute for sinners should be rejected like a sinner. The Father withdrew from His Son, and that caused a darkness within that was in harmony with the dark heavens. It was after three hours of this awful, miraculous, universal, symbolic darkness that Jesus cried: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

II. It was an awful silence as well as an awful darkness.

Just before the sun went down at noon Jesus said "Mother," and then the awful darkness set in and produced an awful silence. There was no silence among the angels when Jesus was

born. Then the heavenly host sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Even in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was sweating blood an angel came and strengthened Him. But where are the angels now? Where is that Father that said: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?" Where is that star of the East now that followed Him when He was born? All heaven is silent.

And ye scoffers, where are your hammers now? Where are those blasphemous tongues? Why are ye standing so silent and trembling? Are the malefactors dead? I hear them not. All over the earth the ploughs are standing still, the shops are closed, the fowls have gone to their roost — all is silence — even Jesus is silent. The word "mother" closed His lips for three hours. In perfect silence He treads the wine-press of God's wrath alone with His bleeding feet, and with bleeding hand He reaches out for the hand of His Father and the hand of a perishing world to bring about a reconciliation, an at-one-ment, an atonement; and after this awful darkness and awful silence of three hours, He cries out: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Dear Brethren, none of us ever will know

how much Jesus did suffer that day. That awful silence ended with an awful cry. It can never be translated. As He cried it, it is printed in every language: Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" The crown of thorns and the piercing nails never caused the Lamb of God to open His mouth, but when the wrath of a just God lay upon Him with all its weight and was pushing Him out of His Father's sight, then He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Dear Lord, let us learn today from Thee, the sinfulness of sin, Thy sympathy for sufferers, the blessing of suffering, the awful state of a Godforsaken sinner. Help us, Thou Wounded Word, to trust Thee who will never forsake us.

"Again, 'My God, My God,' He cried,
'Ah, why dost Thou forsake Me thus?'
Thou art forsaken at this tide,
To win acceptance, Lord, for us;
O comfort deep and marvelous!"

Amen.

SERMON V.

THE WOUNDED WORD THIRSTING.

“**A**FTER this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”
John 19, 28.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

Let us pray! O Thou Wounded Word, not one word that Thou hast spoken shall pass away without being fulfilled. Thou hast been willing to suffer and die for us that all things might be accomplished and the Scriptures be fulfilled. Thy Word shall judge us on the last day. Thy Word is our only true guide today. For our salvation Thou didst thirst on the cross and art thirsting today yet. That we might enjoy everlasting life Thou hast endured the thirst of an eternal death. What have we done to quench Thy thirst, O Lord? Forgive us for Thy mercy's sake and help us now to meditate on these two words of Thine, “I thirst.” Amen.

When Jesus cried, “Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?” the loud cry in some way reached the

ears of the hiding disciples and even moved John to go back to Calvary where he alone of the evangelists heard the Wounded Word say: "I thirst." These two words made a great impression on John, and the Holy Spirit moved him to record them. He wanted the world to know that the Wounded Word, hanging three hours in the darkness — in that awful darkness, had a *bodily, burning, beseeching, and Biblical thirst.*

I. That must have been a real, bodily thirst on the cross. Think of it: before Jesus instituted the Holy Supper, He said: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." Luke 22, 18. Our Lord did not partake of His Supper, because He gave Himself in that Supper to His disciples — His body and His blood — His blood for the remission of sins. The last drink that Jesus took was on Thursday evening before He instituted the Lord's Supper. Follow Him from that upper room to Gethsemane. How He prayed! How He struggled! How He sweat drops of blood! No drink there. Follow Him into the hands of that mob from Gethsemane to Gabbatha and to Golgotha, and the only drink that was offered Him was vinegar mixed with gall. No thirst could move the Wounded Word to drink an opiate in the

face of death. What a lesson here for physicians and the sick. People should die with clear minds and not be drugged half to death before they die. Opiates are a great blessing when they can be given to save lives, but they are a curse when administered to the dying to shut their eyes away from the cross and their ears to the Word of God. Jesus knew that He would suffer and He knew that one of His greatest sufferings would be His awful thirst, but no opiate should rob Him of all His senses during the crucifixion. For twenty long hours Jesus had nothing to drink. They were not twenty hours of sleep and rest, but of constant torture. Fever follows pain and thirst follows fever. A young Mameluke was crucified near the river Barada. When the cross was lifted up and planted his agony was so great that he gave way to convulsive writhings and nearly tore His feet loose from the nails which fastened them. Then came the fever and then the thirst. At last he forgot all about his bleeding hands and feet and the awful thirst moved him to cry with eyes on the river: "Water! Water!! Water!!!"

When Alexander the Great led his army through the desert, they came to a filthy pool and the soldiers drank so fast that many of his army died on the spot. No wonder, then, that

Jesus hanging there on the cross for six hours, cried: "I thirst."

II. But Jesus did not have simply a bodily thirst that day — it was a *burning thirst*. The rich man in hell wanted a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. Without Jesus we would all have cried for water in eternity. The threehours' darkness is the black veil of the burning torment that the Wounded Word was bearing for all the lost. Had the Lamb of God spoken during His silence He might truthfully have said: "I am bearing the torments of the whole world in this flame — not only a three hours' torment, but the everlasting torment of all."

"Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth, He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Isaiah 53, 4-7. All this

He did with His mouth closed before He said, "I thirst."

III. "With His stripes we are healed," and therefore the Savior must have had a beseeching thirst *for our salvation, for our love, and for a reunion with the Father.*

O Wounded Word, what kind of thirst is it that torments Thee? I know Thou hast a bodily and burning thirst, but I believe Thou art thirsting for our salvation — thirsting for the tears of repenting sinners — thirsting for the wells of water that only the Holy Spirit can dig in our stony hearts.

O Wounded Word, what kind of thirst is it that torments Thee? I know that Thou art thirsting for our salvation, but I believe that the unrequited love of a world so loved has made Thee thirst to be loved — thirst for the hands that crucified Thee to labor in Thy vineyard — thirst for the tongues that derided Thee to pray to Thee — thirst for the kings of earth to love the kingdom of God.

O Thou Wounded Word, what kind of thirst is it that torments Thee? I know that Thou art thirsting for our love, and for a sweet reunion with Thy Father. The hour had come that the Substitute for sinners could not say, "Father." Jesus knew from all eternity what it was to be

one with His Father and He knew, too, what it was to live — to die — three hours as if He had no Father: All He could say then in the place of condemned sinners was, "My God! My God!" Oh how He thirsted to see His Father's face again! Some people do not realize the awful condition in which they are: they do not believe in Christ; and, consequently have no Father, but simply, like all other lost souls and creatures, have a God. If the lost world knew what it was to be Christians, every hour of their being without the Father would be an agony that would make them thirst for Him. The poor ignorant lost world does not know that it is too dead to be thirsty for the Father!

IV. Our text clearly shows that Jesus had a *Biblical thirst*. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished *that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, saith, I thirst." Jesus had refused to drink vinegar as a beverage when He was crucified, but when He died He said, "I thirst" even for a taste of vinegar — not to quench His thirst but to fulfill the prophecy: "They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Ps. 69, 21.

St. Augustine said: "The Man that appeared was suffering these things, but the God

who was concealed from view, was disposing them — arranging, disposing and accomplishing all things according to His Word and types and ordinances that had gone before.” Jesus could well hve done wthout that sip of vinegar just before death, but He could not die and not fulfill His Word. Do not forget that it is the Wounded Word that is dying — “The Way and the Truth and the Life.” In these days of “higher critics” we are told that parts of the Bible are not God’s Word; but until I hear God and His holy angels and the prophets and the evangelists and the apostles say so, I’ll consider these “higher critics” about the best messengers that the devil has just now. The hardest things I ever found to believe in the Bible are the very things that Jesus demonstrated to be true. Oh how the Wounded Word must thirst today for true believers in His Word to fill the pulpits and pews of our land!

“Knowing all things” Jesus said, “I thirst.” Who, then, is this thirsting Son of man but the Son of God, if He knows all things? Let us not forget that the Bible called this Wounded Word, “Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God.” In the midst of His humiliation Jesus thirsts to let the omniscient flash of His Divinity shine forth. He knows what was, what is, and what shall be!

Look on this scene of the cross and see the blackness of human ingratitude, the unselfishness of Divine love and the unpardonable sin of constantly rejecting the means of grace.

O my Savior, how often have I given Thee the bitter gall to drink while Thou hast run after me with Thy bleeding feet to give me Thy body and blood to drink. O thirsting Savior make us thirst for Thy Word and Holy Sacraments.

"Once more He saith: 'I thirst, I thirst!'

O Prince of Life! that we might be
Rescued from death, Thou dar'st the worst,
So dost Thou long to set us free;
Not fruitless be that thirst in Thee!"

Amen.

SERMON VI.

THE WOUNDED WORD DYING.

“**W**HEN Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, He said, it is finished.”
John 19, 30.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

Let us pray: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we thank Thee that Thou didst so love us as to finish our redemption on the cross of Calvary. Thou only knowest, our God, what a work it was that Thou didst finish that day when the sun went down at noon and rose again at three o'clock in the afternoon on a redeemed world. Our hearts rejoice that Thine awful agony is past, and we would pray Thee to help us to agonize over our sins that we may confess them, and by Thy grace forsake them. Keep Thyself, the Way to the Father, constantly before our eyes and when Satan would accuse us let us not forget that Thou hast finished our redemption. Amen.

What an hour that must have been in heaven when Jesus cried: “My God, My God, why

hast Thou forsaken Me?" and later, His tongue cleaving to the roof of His mouth, said, "I thirst." These must have been some of the "things the angels desired to look into." I Peter 1, 12. It was the first and last time that His Son ever called Him "My God." It was time now for the sun to shine again on the face of His Wounded Word dying. As the rays of the sun went down on the cross the words went back to heaven: "It is finished." What was finished:

- I. *His greatest thought.*
- II. *His greatest word.*
- III. *His greatest deed.*

I. What was the greatest thought of God? Have we a right to ask that question? Is one thought of the Omniscient greater than the other? In its relation to man, yes. Some of God's thought are deeper to us than others. Some of God's thoughts are so deep that neither man, nor angels, can approach them: they are the "things the angels desire to look into." I, therefore, put the question again: What was the greatest thought of God? All creation is a thought of God. The very cross on which Jesus was dying was one of His own thoughts, but what He finished that day was older than the

cross. Jesus died for man created four thousand years before he nailed his Maker to the cross, but the thought that was finished that day on the cross was older than Adam and Eve. Calvary itself and all the hills of the earth were a thought of Jesus. They tell us that this earth is millions and millions of years old: I do not believe it; but, even if it were, the thought of the Word that made the worlds was older. "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1, 3.

In the garden of Gethsemane an angel strengthened Jesus. That angel was older than the cross, older than man, older than the hills, but younger than the great thought of Jesus which He finished that day on Calvary. The angels were created "to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1, 14. There was a great thought in God's mind before the morning stars sang together, and that thought was this: "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." Eph. 1, 4. That thought Jesus finished on Calvary. Around that thought the angels fly and the world systems turn and the light chases the darkness.

An Italian painter has made himself famous by placing in the National Gallery a picture of "Angels Adoring the Dead Christ." These

angels are represented as not discovering the great love of Jesus till they looked into the face of their dead Lord — dead for the love of men. We might say, they saw a thought older than themselves, finished.

II. Let us not forget that it is the Wounded Word that is dying—that is finishing His greatest word as well as His greatest thought.

The Old Testament is God's Word from beginning to end. Great is that Word. Great is the Word that said: "Let there be light; and there was light." All things were created by the Word of God and we are not surprised when we remember that He is Omnipotent. Is anything impossible for Almighty God?

Great was the promise that the seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head. Gen. 3, 15. But it was not a hard promise to believe. All Israel believed that the Savior would come. Even the wise men of the East looked for Him. Daniel's sermons at Babylon were not forgotten over half a thousand years after they were preached by the heathen in the East because they had no trouble to believe that a Savior would come.

Great are some of the promises not yet fulfilled. The earth shall pass through a destruct-

ive fire; the dead shall rise; the great Judgment Day is coming; these are great words of God.

Any part of God's Word is an impregnable rock able to knock infidelity into a thousand smithereens when prayerfully investigated, but the greatest word that the Word ever gave to the world was His promise to be wounded for our transgressions. That God with his word should create, promise to come, raise the dead, judge the world, and convince us of sin, righteousness and of judgment; all this is great, but the greatest of all were the prophecies and types that pointed to the Wounded Word on the cross. In all the history of the world there never were so many prophecies and types fulfilled in twenty hours as when Jesus was crucified. Dark as it was that afternoon it was not too dark for Jesus to read the 53d Chap. of Isaiah, the 22d Psalm, Genesis 3, 15. It was not too dark for Him to see all the blood shed by animal sacrifices for 4,000 years coming down a river from Eden to stop forever right there where with bleeding hands He was starting the only fountain of forgiveness! It was not too dark for Him to look back and see the brazen serpent erected by Moses as a type of His cross that day. It was not too dark for Him to see that His greatest thought gave to the world His greatest Word which He

was then finishing. And how did He finish that greatest thought and word? By finishing His greatest deed. "It is finished" was the end of the greatest battle ever fought. It was not a battle of an hour, or a day, or a week, or a year, or 30 years, or a thousand years. What pressed the blood out of the pores of Jesus in Gethsemane? How can I tell you what all was in the mind of Jesus that night? Might it not have been a thought before the foundation of the world was laid of the coming conflict? Was it not a battle that surely began back in the Garden of Eden? It must have been a fearful battle that made it necessary for the Captain of our salvation to be strengthened by an angel when He seemed to be all alone. It is said that the battle of Lookout Mountain was fought above the clouds, but when Jesus fought with sin, Satan, death and hell, He fought alone in the dark. Sin said, I will nail Thee to the cross; Satan said, I'll conquer Thee now; death said, I have Thy grave ready; hell said, Satan is King now; — but Jesus in His silence with bleeding hands was tying the Prince of Darkness and conquering death and paying for sin and locking the gates of hell and opening the gates of heaven for all the believers of the redeemed, and when it was done, He cried: "It is finished."

Dear soul, Jesus finished thy redemption on that cross. O lost, condemned world, the Wounded Word redeemed thee that day. O sinner, never forget, whether you will accept Christ or not, whether you spend eternity in heaven, or in hell, He redeemed you. Your sin was punished in Him; your grave was broken open by Him; your accuser, Satan, was bound by Him; the death of the Wounded Word purchased eternal life for us. O lost soul, your last argument is swept away now. If you had no Redeemer you could argue with God on the Judgment Day, but now you must keep silent. God loved you, or He would not have given His only Son to die for you. Jesus loved you, or He would not have laid down His life for you. The Holy Spirit loves you, or He would not plead with you to-day through His Word. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," saith the Wounded Word.

In conclusion let us learn a few lessons from the Dying Word.

Is it not true that we recognize a higher principle in life than to be guided by popular opinion? It was by popular opinion that Jesus was crucified, and the best blood on earth has been spilled. It was popular opinion that burned the martyrs; and it is public opinion today that

is poisoning the minds of great men, and starving the souls of the churches.

Again, let us learn from the Wounded Word to live and die for others. Jesus lived, suffered and died for others. We are to follow Him. Let us learn to hate selfishness and love sacrifice. The only way to be happy is to make others happy. The only way to be rich is to help make others rich; the only way to be a true Christian is to lead others to Christ.

And, finally, let us be faithful till death. Jesus did not stop suffering for us till He died. He finished our redemption; and it was He that said: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2, 10.

"He saith, 'Lo, it is finished now!'

Savior, Thy perfect work is done!

O make us faithful, Lord, as Thou,

No trial and no cross to shun,

Till all Thou lay'st on us be done."

Amen.

SERMON VII.

CONCLUSION.

MEETING THE FATHER AT DEATH'S DOOR.

“**A**ND when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and, having said thus, He gave up the Ghost.” Luke 23, 46.

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

Let us pray! Our Father in heaven, we rejoice that the sufferings of Thy Son Jesus Christ are ended, and that through Him we poor sinners purchased with His blood can now come to Thee to be accepted in mercy as Thy children. We thank Thee, O Jesus, that Thou hast conquered sin, death and hell and art now and forever our Redeemer. We thank Thee, Holy Spirit, for the gift of faith in the crucified Lamb of God. Amen.

As Jesus came into this world, so He met His Father at death's door:

- I. *As the Son of man.*
- II. *As the Son of God.*

This is not a division of time but of the natures of the Wounded Word. He lived and died as the God-man.

I. As Jesus breathes His last and He meets His Father again, after the three hours of darkness, let us behold the Son of man. Surely He was the true Paschal Lamb. On the sixth day of creation God created man; on the sixth of the week Jesus, the Paschal Lamb, died for Him. On the seventh day God rested from all His labors, and with the seventh word on the cross the Wounded Word gave His body to rest in the tomb on the seventh day and His soul to rest in the hands of His Father.

That was a remarkable day when Christ was crucified. Nisan was the first month in the Jewish year and the 14th of Nisan was the Pass-over commemorating the night when Israel was delivered from Egypt and the lamb was eaten and the angel of death passed over those homes marked with blood. The old Jewish rabbis held that day very sacred. They claimed that was the day that Cain killed Abel, the day that Esau sold his birth-right to Jacob, the day that Gideon smote the Midianites, the day that Melchisedek met Abraham, the day that Abraham led Isaac up on Mount Moriah to be offered; the day that the final redemption should take place.

That very evening when the Lamb of God died on Calvary thousands of lambs were killed in the outer court of the temple, one for every household, that their blood might be offered before the same God who was then receiving the Spirit of the Great Passover — Jesus Christ.

Surely, He was the Son of man. John tells us that when the soldiers found that Jesus was dead they did not break His legs, but pierced His side, and blood and water came out. John 19, 34. That blood and water tells a wonderful story now in these days of medical science. It is known that people often die from great joy or grief. People die of broken hearts. Do you know what a "broken heart" means? Human blood, after escaping from the blood vessels, coagulates, its watery parts slowly separating from its thicker substance. When the heart ruptures, the blood passes into the pericardium and there coagulates, and when it finds an escape it is blood and water. The blood and water which John saw prove three things:

1. That the sufferings of Jesus broke His heart;
2. That He was actually dead — the heart gave up its life;
3. That He was the Son of man.

Yes, He was the Son of man, for He gave

up His soul. He had a soul as well as any other man. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful — even unto death." Matt. 26, 38. When He met the Father at death's door, as the Son of man, He gave up that soul.

II. But even then when His soul is passing into the hands of His Father, the Son of man is still the Son of God.

Notice well that Jesus died with the same word on His lips that He used when He prayed for His persecutors — "Father." The Father cried twice from the heavens: "This is My beloved Son!" and the Son began and ended His sufferings on the cross by addressing His Father.

Do not overlook the fact that Jesus did not die because He had to give up His soul. The Father did not go to the cross and demand the Spirit of Jesus. The Wounded Word could have stepped down from that cross in the last moment and let the world perish. No man ever died as Jesus did. Others have used His words, but none, like the Son of God, did with His soul as He pleased in the last moment of life.

When a man dies his voice grows weaker and weaker till his soul departs, but when Jesus died He showed that He was the Son of God in the last moment by crying with a loud voice. It was no ordinary cry. It made a wonderful

impression when in His last moment Jesus let His Divine nature pierce the ears near and far while the veil of the temple was tearing and the earth was quaking, and the rocks were shaking, and the graves were opening, and the dead were rising, and the centurion was saying, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

"Mark the sacrifice appointed!
See *who* bears the awful load;
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of man and *Son of God.*"

Thus the Wounded Word "bowed" His head and gave up the "ghost." John 19, 30. Meeting the Father at death's door, He bowed His head, His thorn-crowned head, away from Pilate's superscription, away from all worldly honor, out to those who crucified Him, out to all the heathen nations of the world and down, as Origen says, "to recline on the bosom of His Father."

O Wounded Word, we have heard Thine intercedings in the light and also Thy three atoning words of the night,

"And last, — My Father, to Thine hands
My parting soul I now commend.'
Lord, when my spirit trembling stands
Upon life's verge, this cry I send
To Thee, and with Thy words I end."

Or, if it please Thee, let us in that hour exclaim :

"O death, where is thy sting? Approach! Appear!
I fear thee not; kind messenger, draw near;
Methought with terror I should look on thee,
Yet naught to me affright in thee I see,
'Tis not in anger, but in tenderest love
That thou art sent, to summon me above:
Christ from that angel face removed all dread,
When in thine arms He sank, and 'bowed His head'."

Amen.

The Seven Words on the Cross

THE SEVEN WORDS ON THE CROSS.

I.

The hammer falls, the nails are driven,
They slay the Lord of earth and heaven.
They nail His body to the cross
And cast the lot about His clothes.
The wicked nails His sinews cleave
Beneath the hammer's blow,
But listen: "Father, them forgive,
They know not what they do."

II.

The deed is done. He hangs between
The malefactors with Him slain,
And scoffing parts polluted lips,
While penitence the other steeps
In Jesus' blood, Who with him dies
And says: "I say to thee,
To-day with Me in Paradise
Thou verily shalt be."

III.

A mourning, weeping multitude
There at the cross of Jesus stood.
The Savior's mother, bent with grief
And trembling as an aspen-leaf,
And other mourners standing near,

The Savior says to John,
"Behold thy mother," and to her,
"O woman, behold thy son!"

IV.

Deep darkness wraps the golden ray
In ghastly night at noon of day
And spreads a gloom upon the world,
The shroud of nature seems unfurled,
When now the loud and anguished cry
Rises from the accursed tree:
"My God, my God, O why, O why
Hast Thou forsaken me!"

V.

The seers' visions soon fulfilled,
The wrath of God will soon be stilled
And all the world be washen clean
From all the grime of wrong and sin.
The final hour is drawing nigh,
And soon the Lamb accursed
Is free. But hark; another cry
Of misery: "I thirst."

VI.

A sour drink it was, indeed,
Within the sponge upon the reed
That quenched the thirst of holy lips
Of Him, who all in goodness steeps.
The spotless Lamb of sacrifice
Is slain, the High-priest sees

Deliverance coming from the skies;
"Tis finished," He decrees.

VII.

The vale of death its somber shades
Before the tortured Savior spreads
And down His Head He fainting bends
And up His dying prayer ascends.
Ah, that it be at my life's end
The prayer, that upward flies:
"In Thy hands, Father, I commend
My spirit." He dies, He dies.

F. W. ARICHEL.

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